

Graduate
Management
Admission
Council™

Market Intelligence

Employability and Business School Graduates

Corporate Recruiters Survey 2019

August 2019

In partnership with:



EFMD



MBA Career Services
& Employer Alliance



HIGHERED
EFMD Global Career Services



Employability and Business School Graduates: Corporate Recruiters Survey 2019 is a product of the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), an association of leading graduate business schools worldwide. Founded in 1953, we are committed to creating solutions for business schools and candidates to better discover, evaluate and connect with each other. We work on behalf of the schools and the graduate management education community, as well as guide candidates on their journey to higher education, to ensure that no talent goes undiscovered. GMAC provides world-class research, professional development opportunities and assessments for the industry, designed to advance the art and science of admissions. Owned and administered by GMAC, the Graduate Management Admission Test™ (GMAT™) exam is the most widely used graduate business school assessment, recognized by more than 7,000 programs worldwide. Other GMAC assessments include the NMAT by GMAC™ (NMAT™) exam, for entrance into graduate management programs in India and 10 other countries, and the Executive Assessment (EA), specifically designed for executive programs around the world. GMAC is a global organization with offices in Hong Kong, China; Gurugram, India; Singapore; London, United Kingdom; and the United States. To learn more about our work, please visit www.gmac.com.

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Introduction

More than 1,200 employers worldwide responded to the Corporate Recruiters Survey in 2019

The Corporate Recruiters Survey provides an overview of current employer hiring demand for MBA and business master's graduates and examines hiring practices and trends by industry and world region.

The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), together with survey partners MBA Career Services and Employer Alliance (MBA CSEA), EFMD, and HIGHERED conducted the survey in February and March 2019, in association with career services offices at 116 participating graduate business schools worldwide.

The analysis featured in this report is based on responses received from 1,202 employers in 45 countries worldwide who work directly with participating business schools, including 33 percent in the Fortune Global 100 and 500.

This report presents survey findings related to the topic of employability, including:

- Employers' perception of business school graduates' level of preparedness to be successful at their companies
- The level of importance employers place on specific skills for job openings for recent business school graduates
- Employer evaluation of how well business schools prepare graduates with specific skills
- Factors important in the hiring decision

The [Business School Hiring Report](#), published in May, presents trends in hiring and compensation for MBA and business master's graduates.

About the Data

This study does not represent a census of all employers of graduate business students worldwide, nor is it necessarily a representative sample of such employers. Because of this limitation, the results of this research study should not be used to generalize about the employer population, but they can be used as a reflection of the sample frame under consideration.

Explore and Filter the Data for Yourself

Participating graduate business schools and responding employers receive access to an accompanying interactive benchmark report.

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Business School Participation in GMAC™ Research

GMAC Research offers graduate business schools opportunities to gather data and generate insights about the business school pipeline. Schools can sign up to participate in the GMAC Application Trends Survey and Corporate Recruiters Survey on our survey sign-up page:

www.gmac.com/surveysignup

Graduate management education is not the candidate's goal—it's a means to their goal of employability

Employability—the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required—is a driving force for many candidates in their decision to pursue graduate management education (GME). These candidates are drawn to GME because they have a reasonable expectation that a graduate business credential will lead to the improved employment outcomes they seek, and to that end employability outcomes are an important factor in candidates' evaluation of their GME options.

Because of the primacy of employability to candidate choices, it's essential that business school professionals in a variety of functional areas understand what today's employers look for in hiring recent business school graduates, how they make their employment decisions, and how they judge business schools on preparing their graduates for success.

- **Career services** can leverage insights on the hiring process to inform their advisement of students in their job search.
- **Business school and program leadership** require a feedback loop from industry to assess their curriculums' relevance against market demand.
- Timely insights on employability provide **admissions offices** a lens through which applicants can be evaluated as a part of a holistic admissions process.
- Understanding what employers are looking for and their opinions of graduates can help **marketing and recruitment teams** to better communicate the professional value of a degree from their institution.

Findings from more than 1,200 responses to the Corporate Recruiters Survey 2019 detailed in this report show that employers overwhelmingly agree that business school graduates are prepared to be successful at their companies. Overall, nearly 9 in 10 agree or strongly agree that their new business school hires are primed for success at their organizations.

By a wide margin, problem solving and working with others are the skills that recruiters say are the most important for the job openings they plan to fill with business school graduates. From a list of 10 skills, the majority of recruiters select these two skills as among the top three most important. The vast majority of recruiters say graduates are adequately prepared or very well prepared in the 10 skills. By a slight margin, recruiters give their most favorable review to graduates' skill preparation for quantitative tasks and oral communication and presentation.

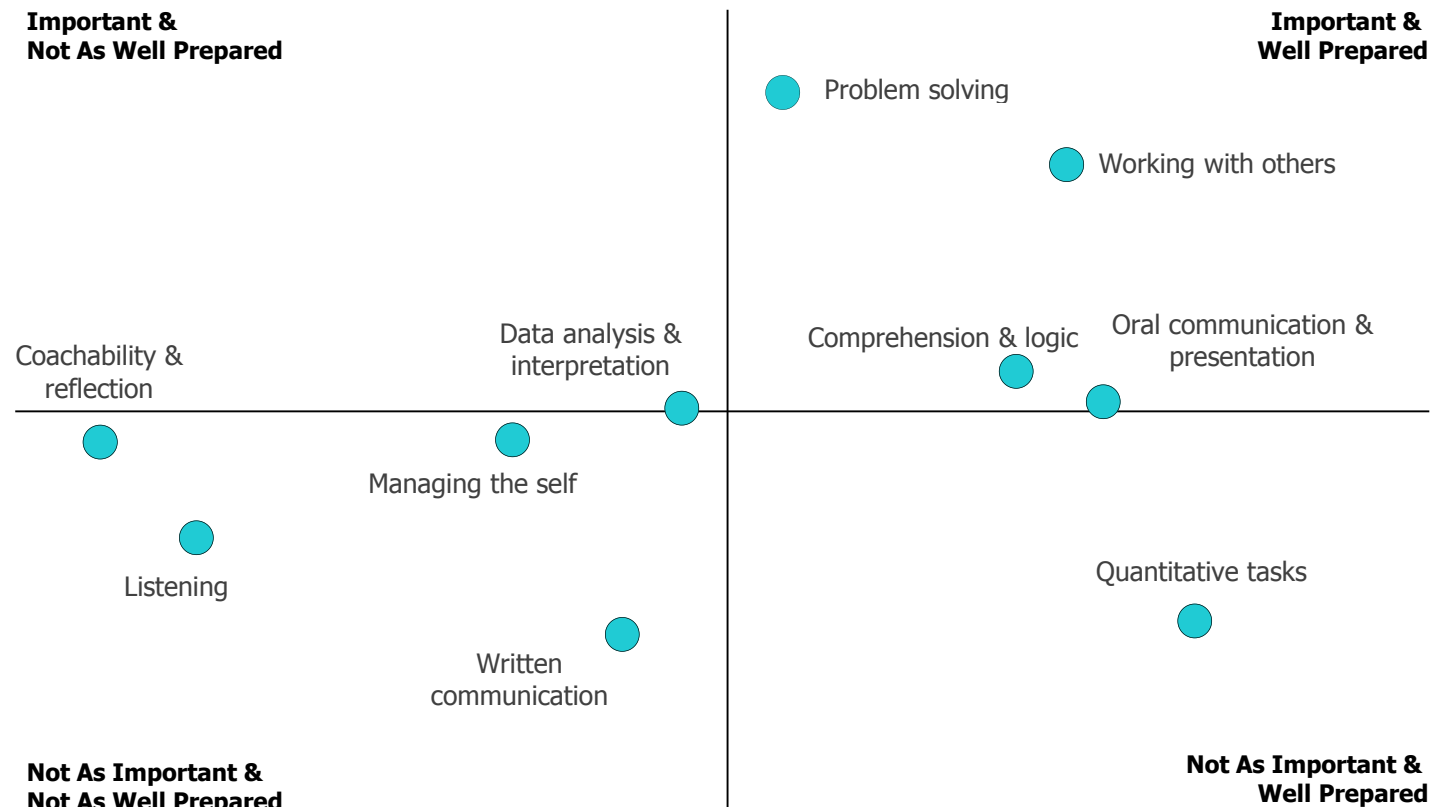
In making hiring decisions, recruiters tend to place more importance on fit—both with the company culture and the job opening—than on prior direct experience or growth potential. Among the total sample of responding recruiters, 37 percent rank fit with company culture as their most important hiring decision factor, and 31 percent say fit with the job opening is most important.

Analysis of survey responses by company world region, company type, industry, and size reveal interesting differences in recruiter opinion. Summaries of the key takeaways of this analysis can be found on the opening page of each section of the report.

Executive Summary

Gap analysis: Employers give b-schools high marks for preparing grads with the two skills they say matter most

The Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates and Employer Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation



Executive Summary

Nearly 9 in 10 recruiters agree that business school graduates are well prepared to be successful in their company

Among the full sample of responding recruiters, when asked about their level of agreement with the statement “Business school graduates are well prepared to be successful in my company,” about 2 in 3 agree (65%) and 1 in 4 strongly agree (21%). Just 1 in 10 disagree (12%) and 2 percent strongly disagree.

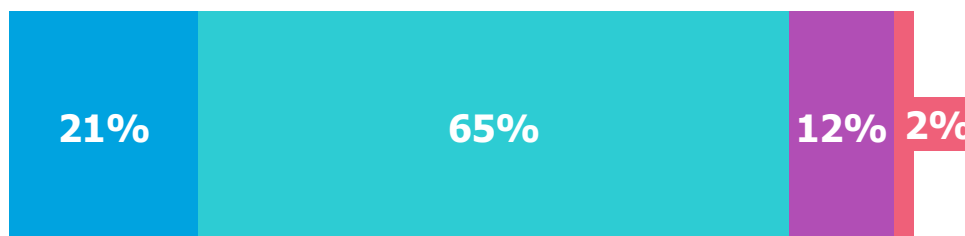
As detailed in this report, favorable attitudes about business school graduates are observed across company characteristics.

US employers have generally more favorable perspectives than European or Asia Pacific employers, as do larger companies. For example, 39 percent of Fortune Global 100 companies strongly agree that business school graduates are well prepared for success in their companies. By industry, confidence in business school graduates is strongest in the finance/accounting, technology, and health care sectors.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Business School Graduates Are Well Prepared to Be Successful in My Company

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



Percentage of Respondents

Executive Summary

Problem solving and working with others are the skills recruiters identify as the most important for their job openings

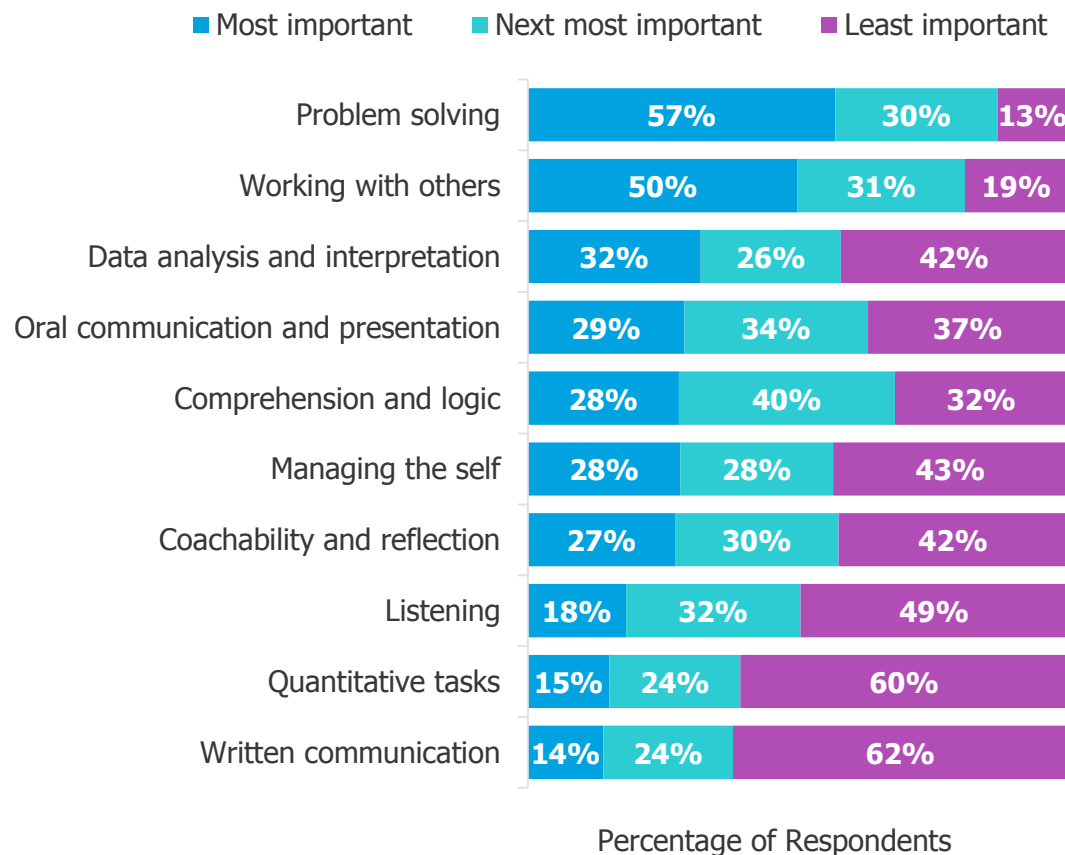
From a list of 10 skills, recruiters identify problem solving and working with others as the skills they say are the most important for job openings they plan to fill with business school graduates. A majority of recruiters select these two skills as among the top three most important.

As shown in subsequent sections of this report, across company characteristics these two skills are identified as the most important.

Asia Pacific companies tend to rate the importance of data analysis and interpretation skills as more important than companies in Europe and the United States. Smaller companies tend to rate written communication, managing the self, coachability and reflection, and listening as more important to their current job openings, whereas larger companies tend to rate the skills of data analysis and interpretation, working with others, and oral communication and presentation as more important.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates



Executive Summary

Recruiters say business schools prepare graduates well across various skills; Most favorable on quant. tasks and presentations

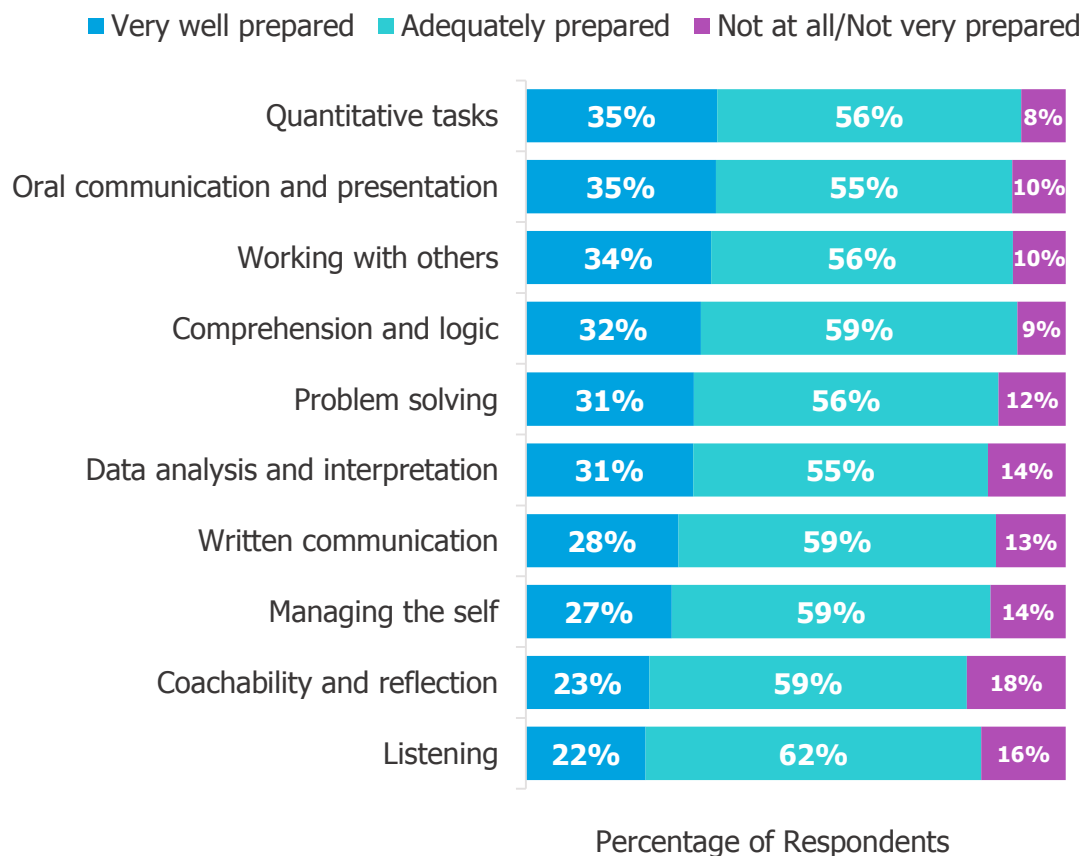
In evaluating how well prepared recent business school graduates are in the same list of 10 skills, the vast majority of recruiters say graduates are adequately prepared or very well prepared in all of them. Among the full sample of responding recruiters, highest marks are given to graduates' preparation in the skills of quantitative tasks and oral communication and presentation, though only by a slight margin.

As detailed in this report, recruiters across company characteristics give recent business school graduates positive reviews for their level of preparation in the 10 skills.

US companies are more likely to rate graduates' skills in working with others and managing the self higher than companies in Europe and Asia Pacific. Larger employers (e.g., Fortune Global 100 and companies with 10,000 or more employees) tend to give more favorable evaluations across the 10 skills.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation



Executive Summary

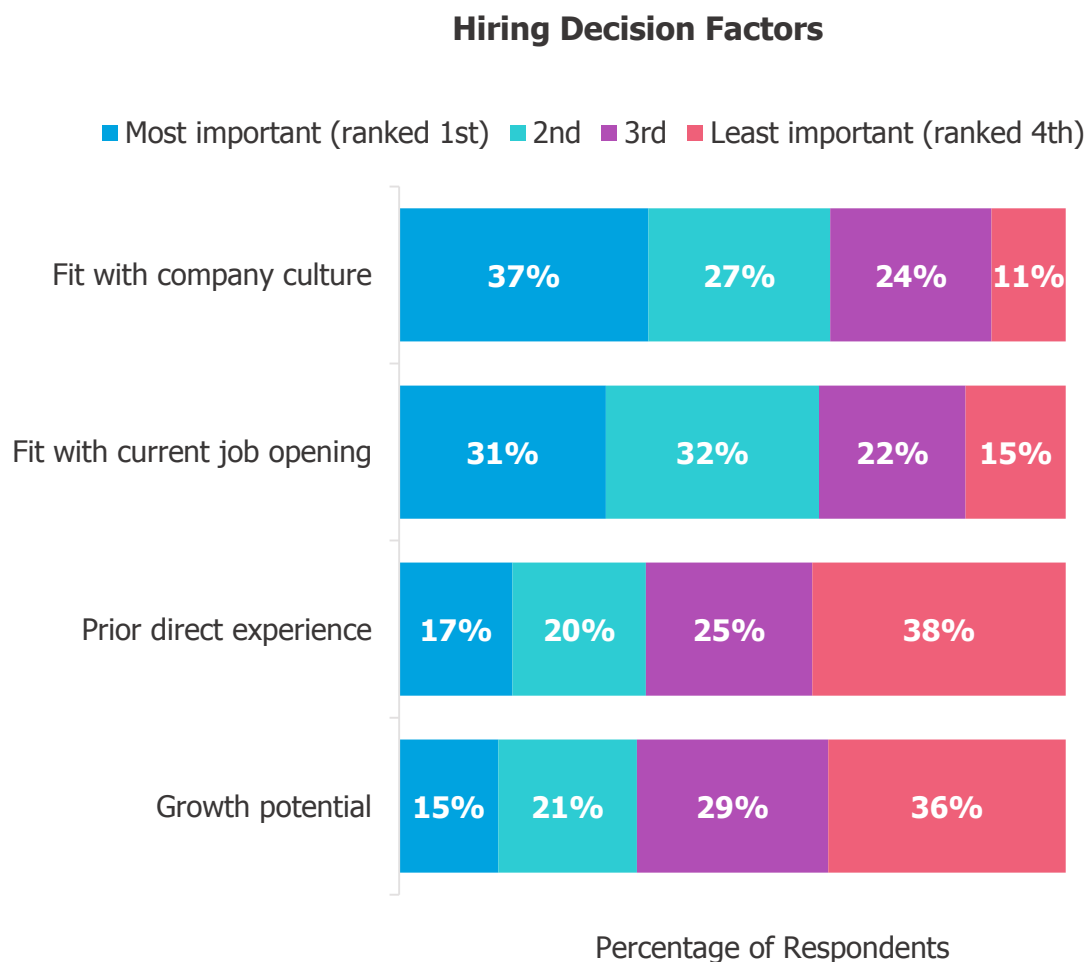
Candidate fit with company culture and fit with the job opening are the most important hiring decision factors

When asked to rank four items (growth potential, fit with current job opening, fit with company culture, and prior direct experience) in order of importance to the hiring decision of a business school candidate, 37 percent of responding recruiters rank fit with company culture as their most important hiring decision factor. Thirty-one percent identify fit with the job opening as most important.

As shown later in this report, across company characteristics these two dimensions of fit are the top two hiring decision factors.

Smaller companies tend to place relatively more weight on fit with the job opening and prior direct experience, whereas larger employers place relatively more weight on fit with the company culture and growth potential. Compared with Asia Pacific and US employers, European companies tend to put more importance on growth potential and less on prior direct experience.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.



World Region

This section presents survey findings by company world region, including the United States, Europe, and Asia Pacific.

While strong majorities of responding recruiters in each region agree that graduates are well prepared to be successful in their companies, US employers have generally more favorable perspectives than European or Asia Pacific employers.

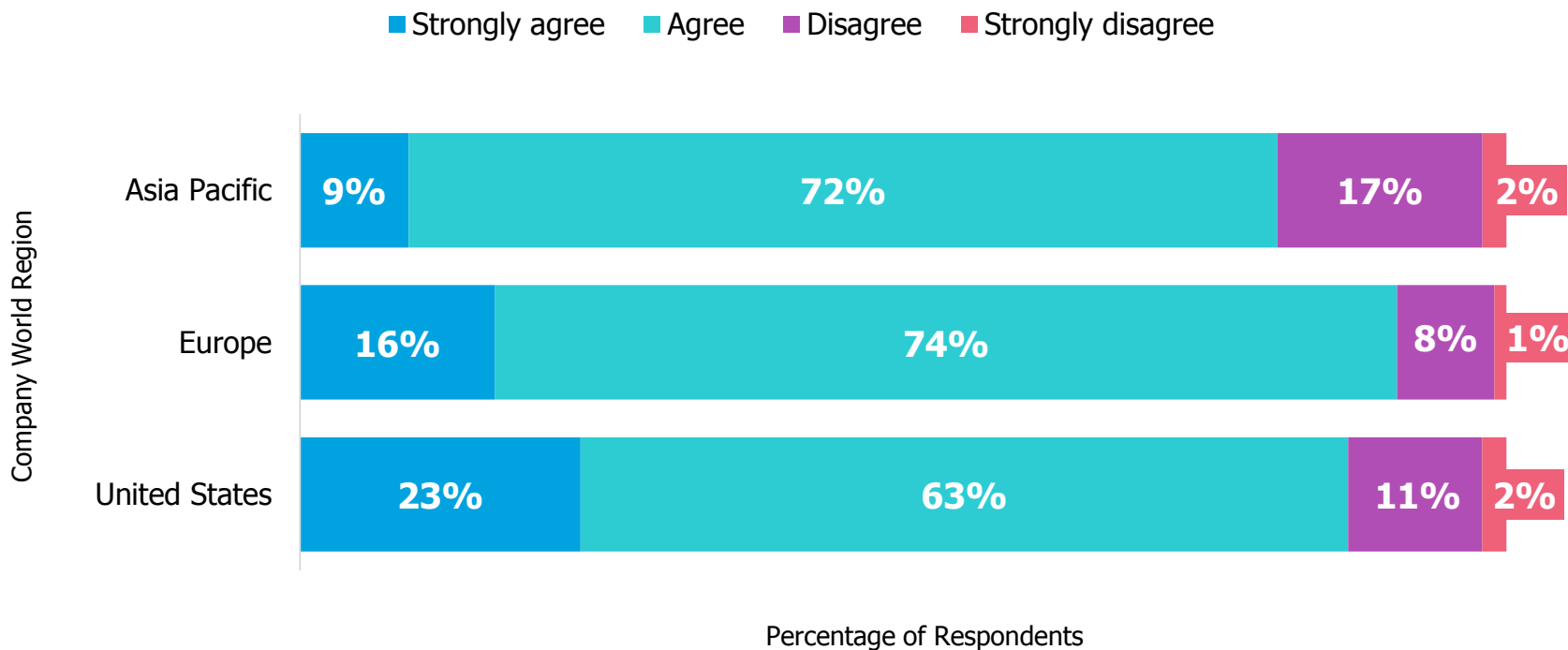
For job openings they plan to fill with business school graduates, Asia Pacific companies tend to rate the importance of data analysis and interpretation skills as more important than companies in Europe and the United States. US companies are more likely to rate graduates' skills in working with others and managing the self higher than companies in Europe and Asia Pacific.

Though fit with the company culture and the job opening are the most important hiring decision factors across world regions, European employers place the greatest importance on growth potential and the least on prior direct experience. This is likely reflective of the predominance of pre-experience programs in Europe.



Across world regions, recruiters are bullish on recent business school graduates' preparation to be successful

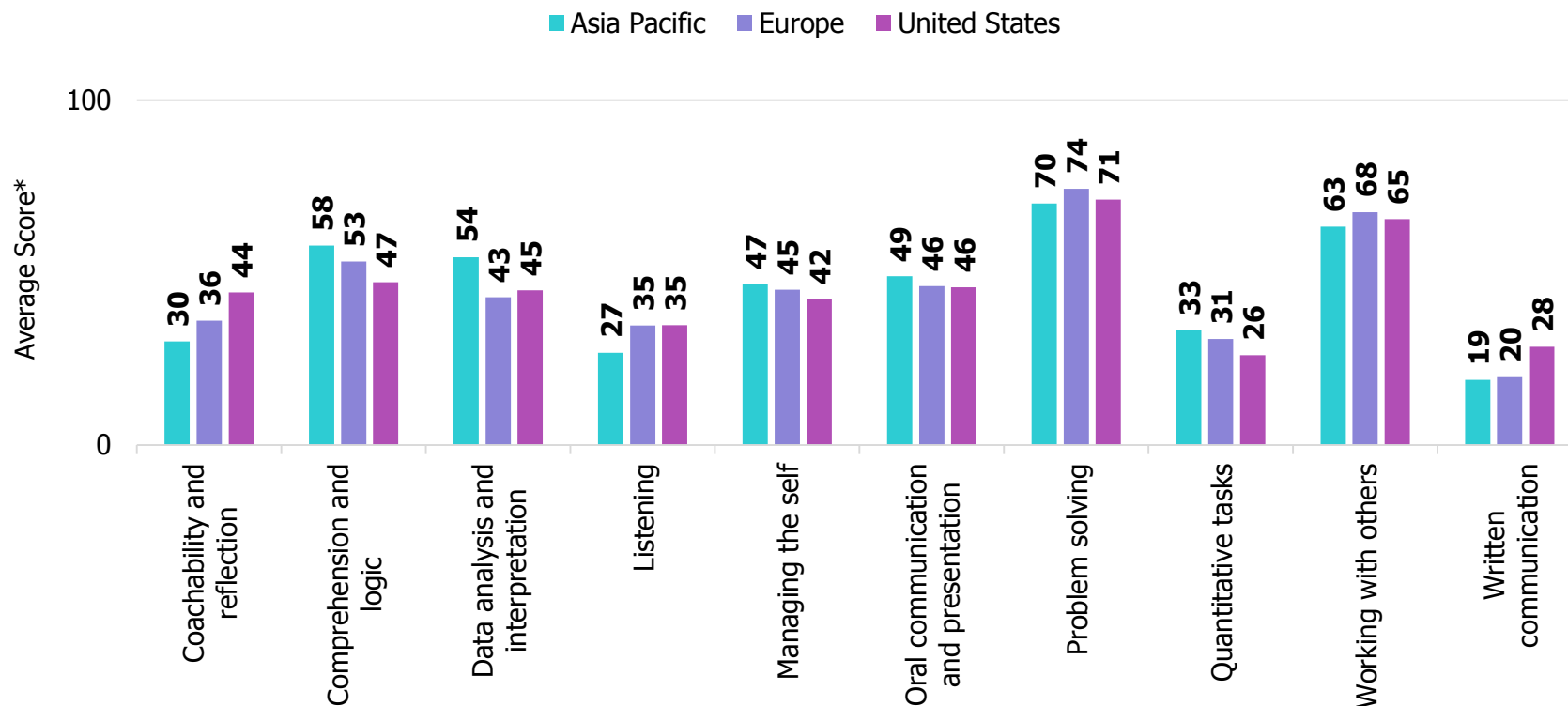
Business School Graduates Are Well Prepared to Be Successful in My Company, by World Region



More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Problem solving and working with others are important across regions; Other skills vary in importance regionally

Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates, by World Region

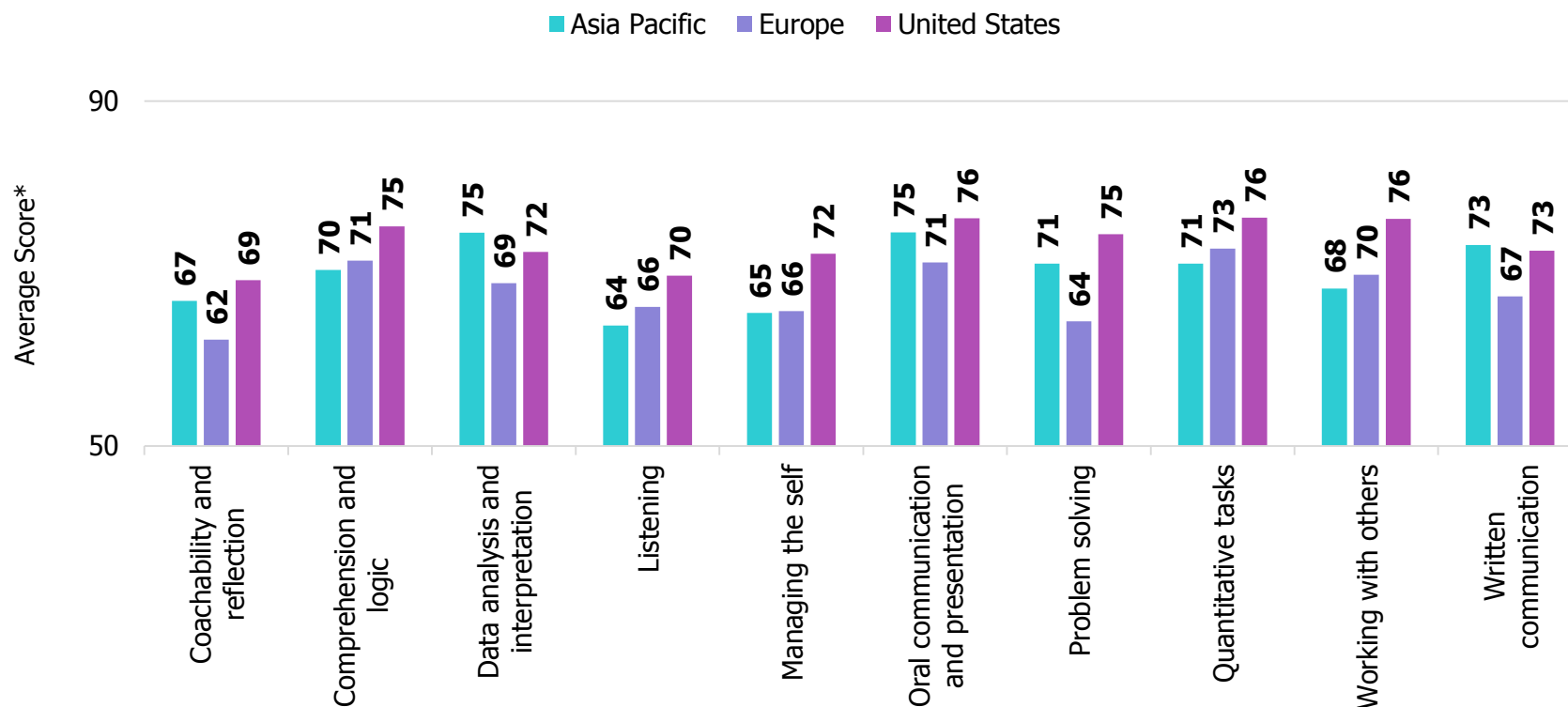


*Scale: 100 = Ranked in top 3; 50 = Ranked in next 3; 0 = Remaining 4.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Recruiters give business schools high marks for skill preparation, with some variation by world region

Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation, by World Region

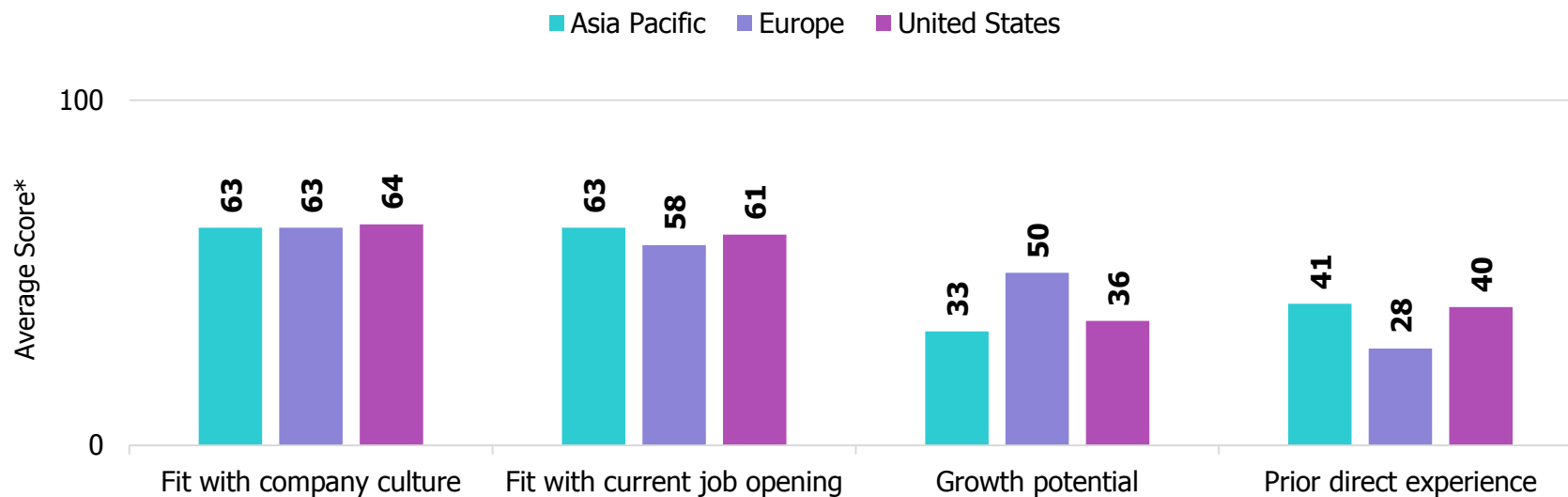


*Scale: 100 = Very well prepared; 67 = Adequately prepared; 33 = Not very prepared; 0 = Not at all prepared.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Fit with company culture and job opening top hiring decision factors across regions; Growth potential important in Europe

Hiring Decision Factors, by World Region



*Scale: 100 = Ranked most important; 67 = ranked second most important; 33 = ranked third most important; 0 = least important. More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

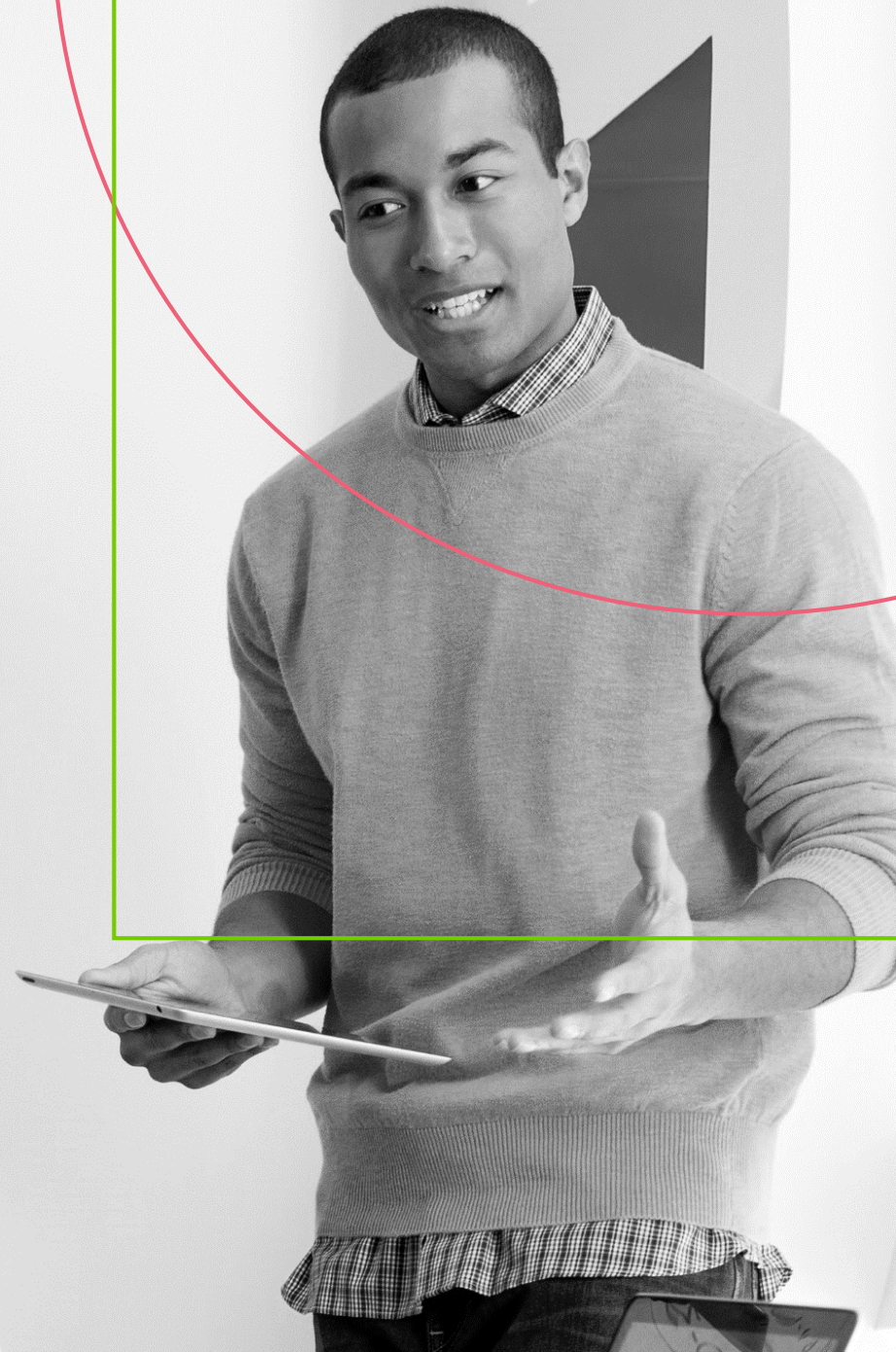
Company Type

This section presents survey findings by company type, including Fortune Global 100; Fortune Global 500; for-profit, public; for-profit, private; and startup.

Generally, the larger company types (Fortune Global 100; Fortune Global 500; for-profit, public) have a more positive outlook of business school graduates' level of preparedness to be successful at their companies. For example, 39 percent of Fortune Global 100 employers strongly agree graduates are prepared for success, compared with 18 percent of for-profit, private companies.

Compared with other company types, startups tend to rate several soft skills as relatively more important to their current job openings, including coachability and reflection, managing the self, and listening. Companies in the Fortune Global 100 and 500, on the other hand, tend to rate several hard skills as relatively more important, including data analysis and interpretation and oral communication and presentation.

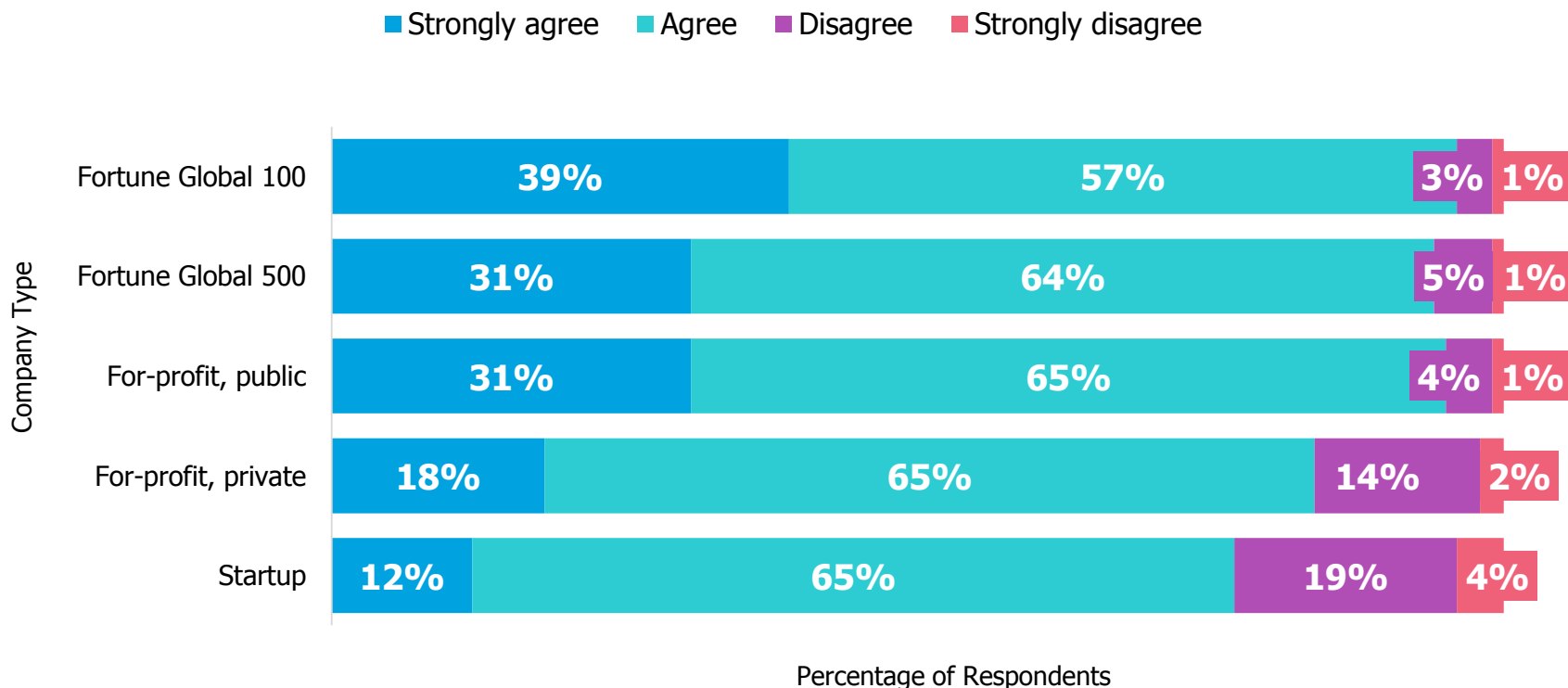
In making hiring decisions, startups tend to place more weight on fit with the job opening and prior direct experience compared with other company types. Fortune Global 100 and 500 companies place relatively more weight on growth potential.



Company Type

Fortune Global and for-profit, public companies are the most likely to say recent graduates are prepared for success

Business School Graduates Are Well Prepared to Be Successful in My Company, by Company Type

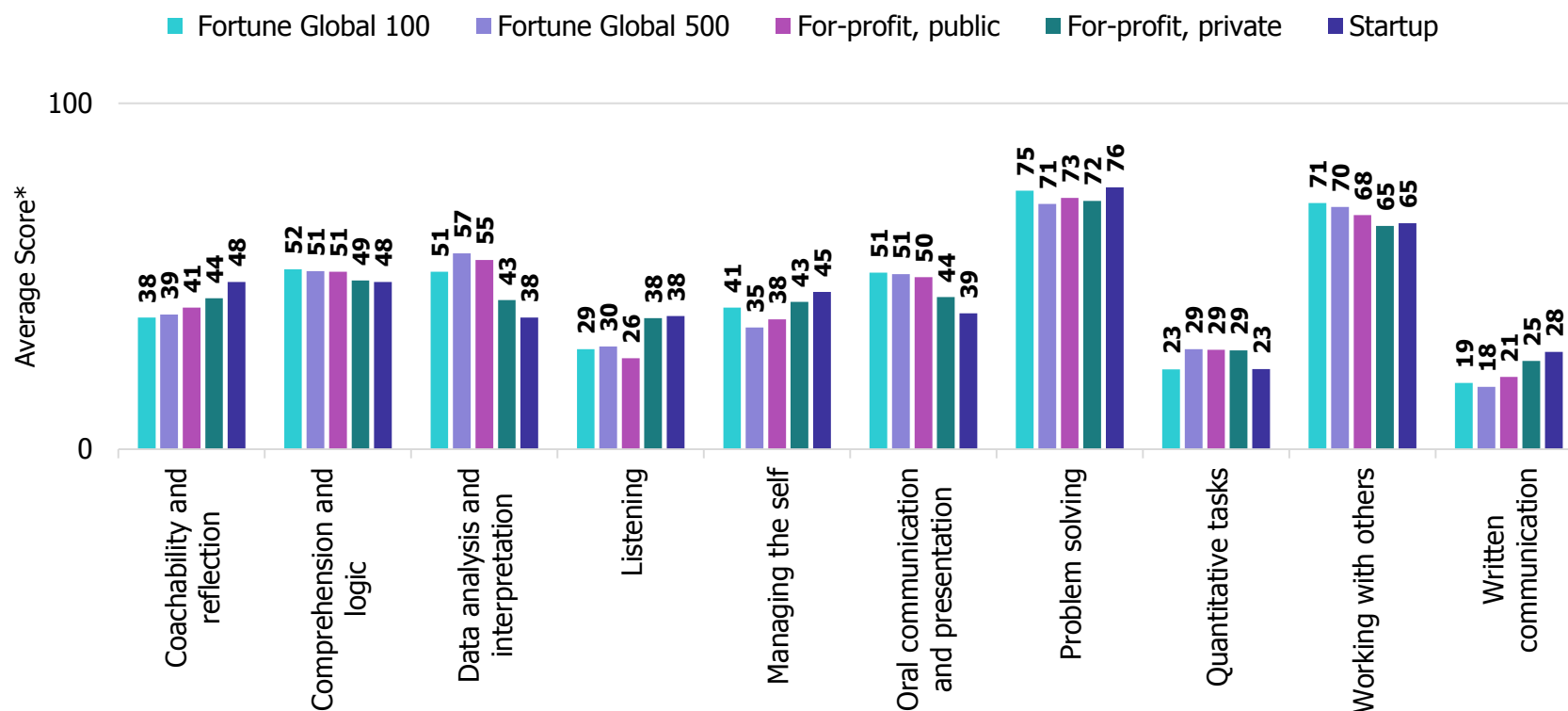


More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Company Type

Across company types, problem solving and working with others top the list of skills important for current job openings

Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates, by Company Type

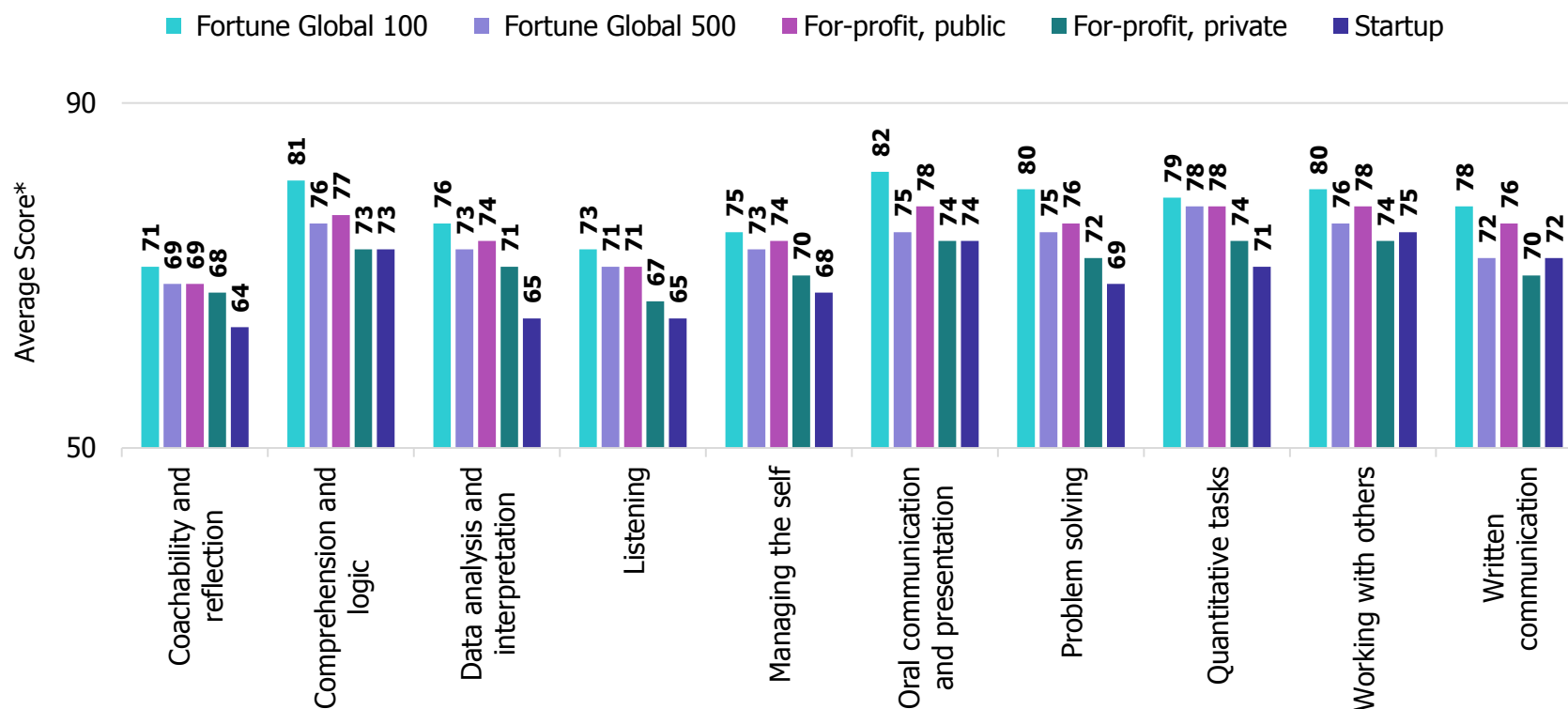


*Scale: 100 = Ranked in top 3; 50 = Ranked in next 3; 0 = Remaining 4.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Fortune Global 100 companies tend to evaluate business school skill preparation more positively than other company types

Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation, by Company Type



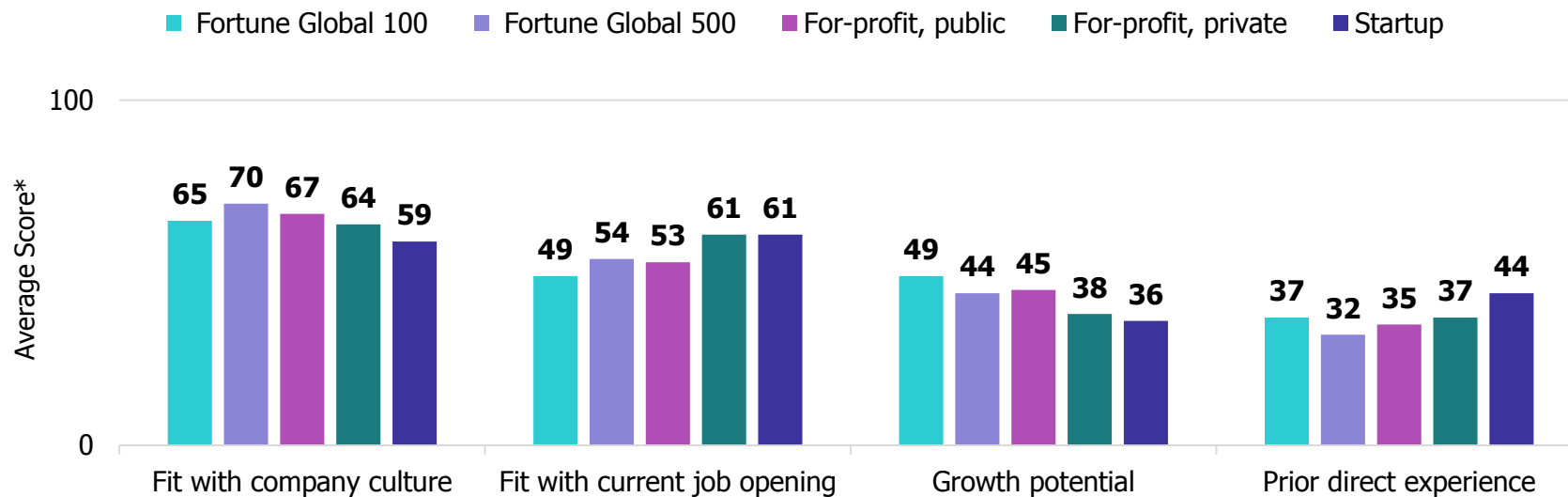
*Scale: 100 = Very well prepared; 67 = Adequately prepared; 33 = Not very prepared; 0 = Not at all prepared.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Company Type

Fit with company culture and job opening most important; Growth potential big for Fortune companies, experience big for startups

Hiring Decision Factors, by Company Type



*Scale: 100 = Ranked most important; 67 = ranked second most important; 33 = ranked third most important; 0 = least important. More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

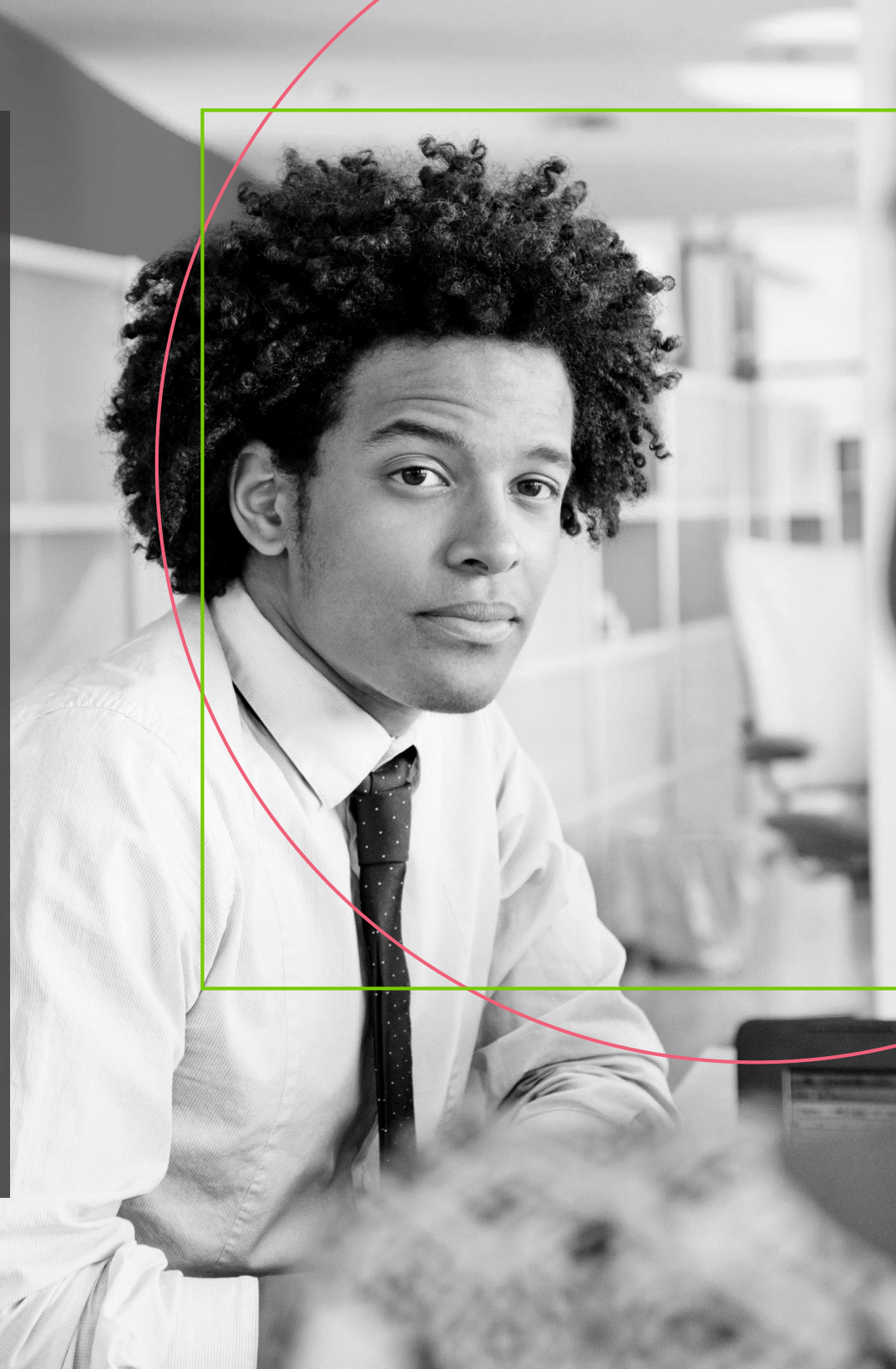
Industry

This section presents survey findings by company industry, including consulting, energy/utilities, finance/accounting, health care, manufacturing, nonprofit/government, products/services, and technology.

Recruiter confidence in recent business school graduates is strong across industries, particularly the finance/accounting, technology, and health care sectors. Twenty-three percent of nonprofit/government recruiters do not agree that graduates are well prepared to be successful in their organizations, notably higher than other industries.

For job openings they plan to fill with business school graduates, recruiters in the technology industry place the most importance on the skills of problem solving, working with others, and comprehension and logic. Compared with the technology industry, employers in the consulting sector place more importance on quantitative tasks, oral communication and presentation, and written communication.

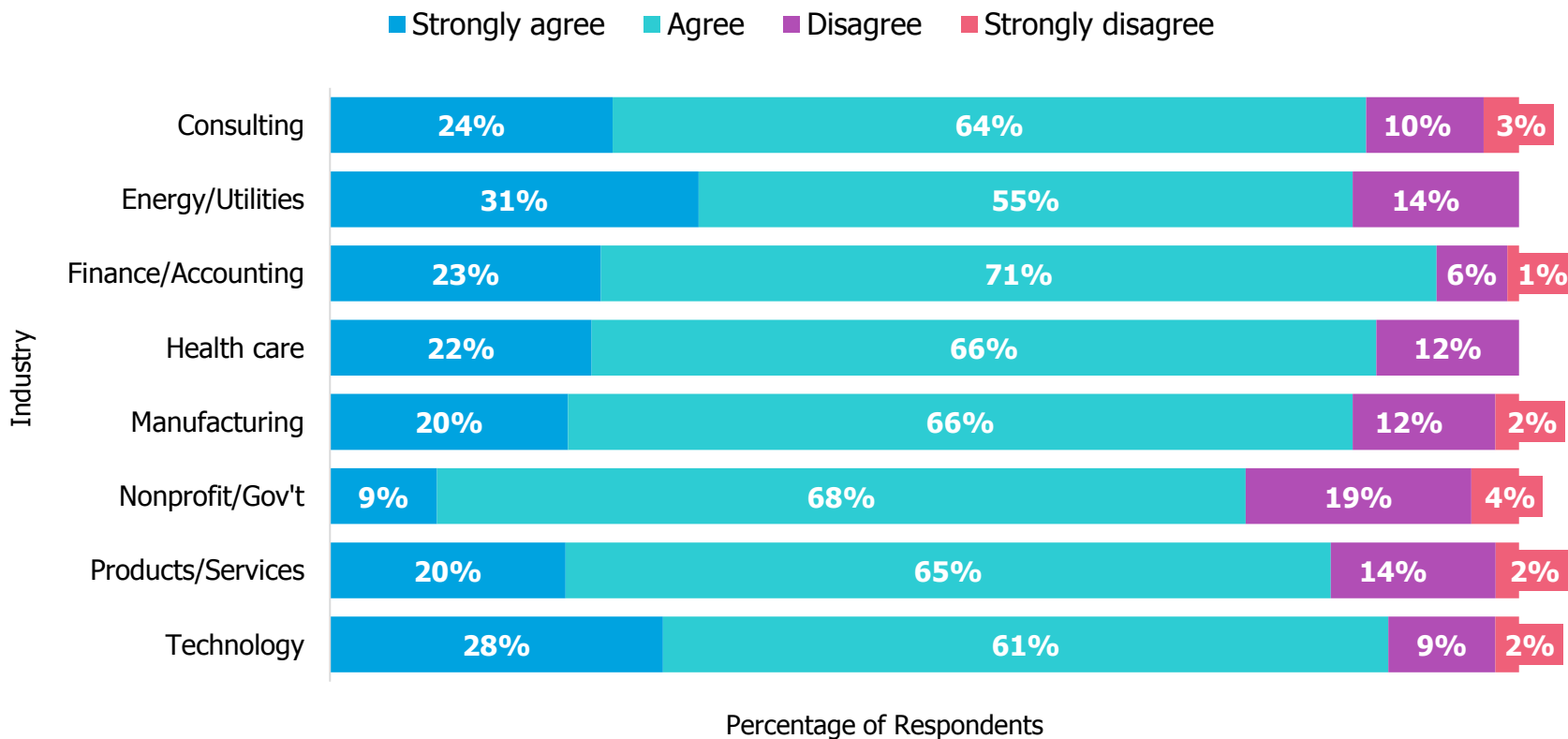
Across industries, fit with the company culture and fit with the job opening are the top hiring decision factors. For most industries fit with the company culture is weighted more heavily. A notable exception is the nonprofit/government sector, which places relatively more importance on fit with the current job opening.



Industry

Recruiter confidence in recent graduates strong across industries, particularly finance, tech, and health care

Business School Graduates Are Well Prepared to Be Successful in My Company, by Industry

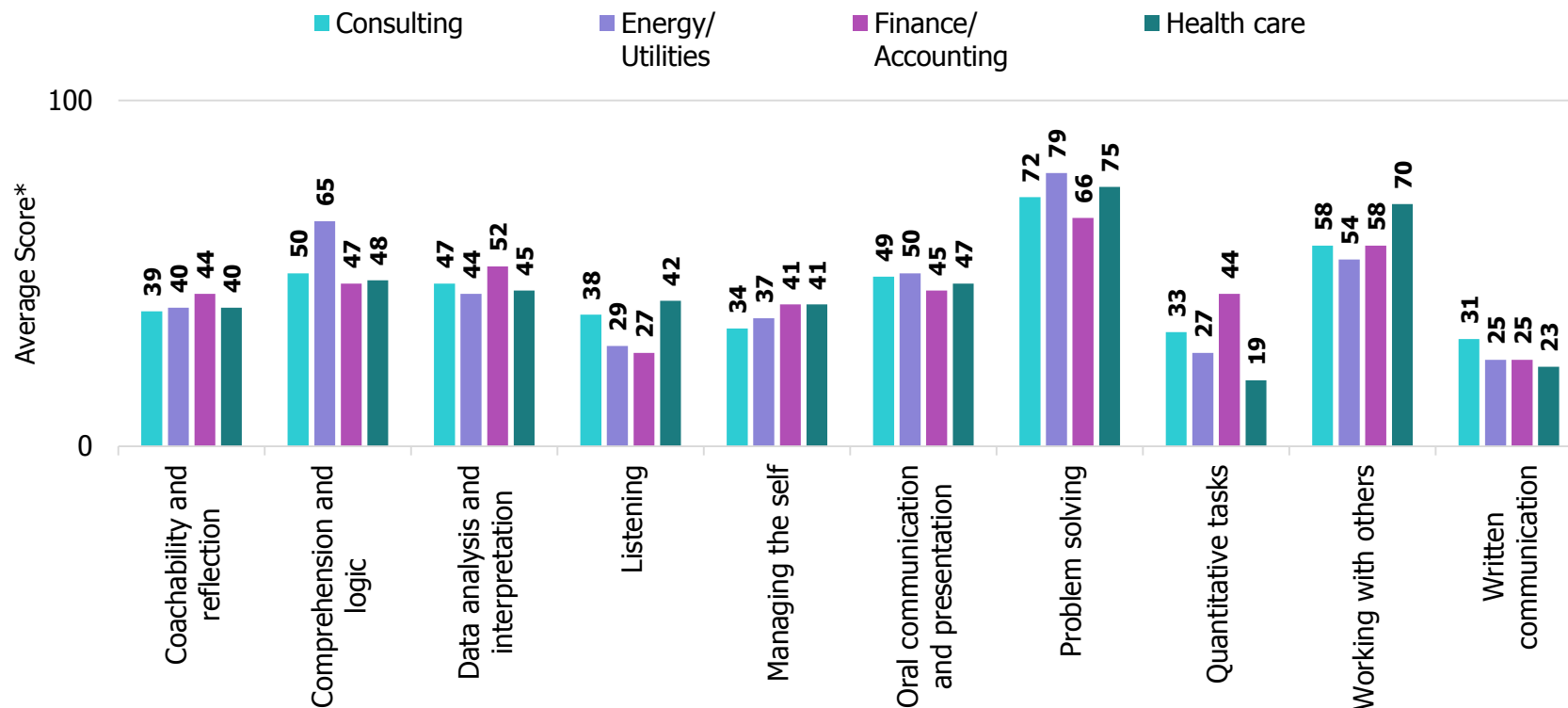


More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Industry

Across industries, problem solving and working with others are the top two important skills, with the exception of energy/utilities

**Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates, by Industry
(Continued on Next Page)**



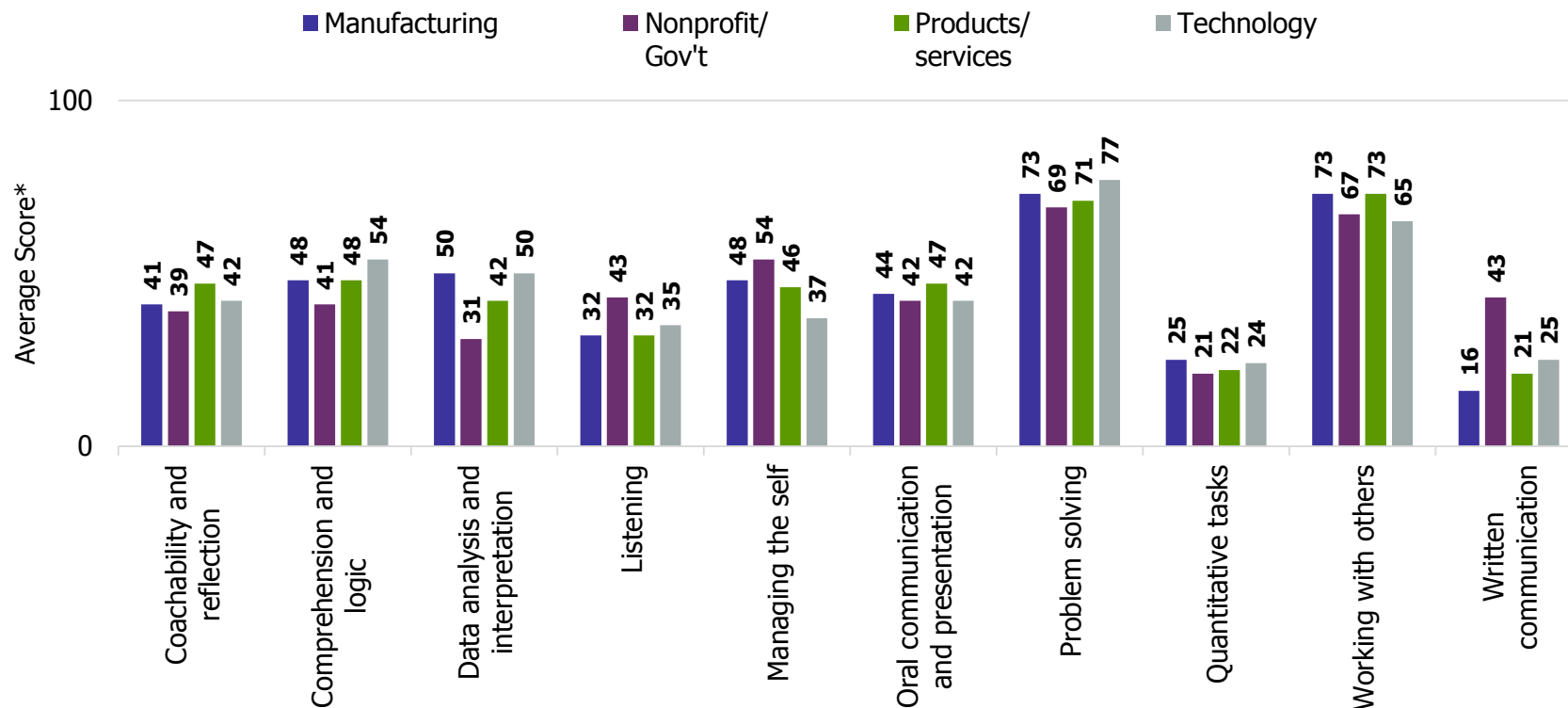
*Scale: 100 = Ranked in top 3; 50 = Ranked in next 3; 0 = Remaining 4.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Industry

Across industries, problem solving and working with others are the top two important skills, with the exception of energy/utilities

**Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates, by Industry
(Continued From Previous Page)**

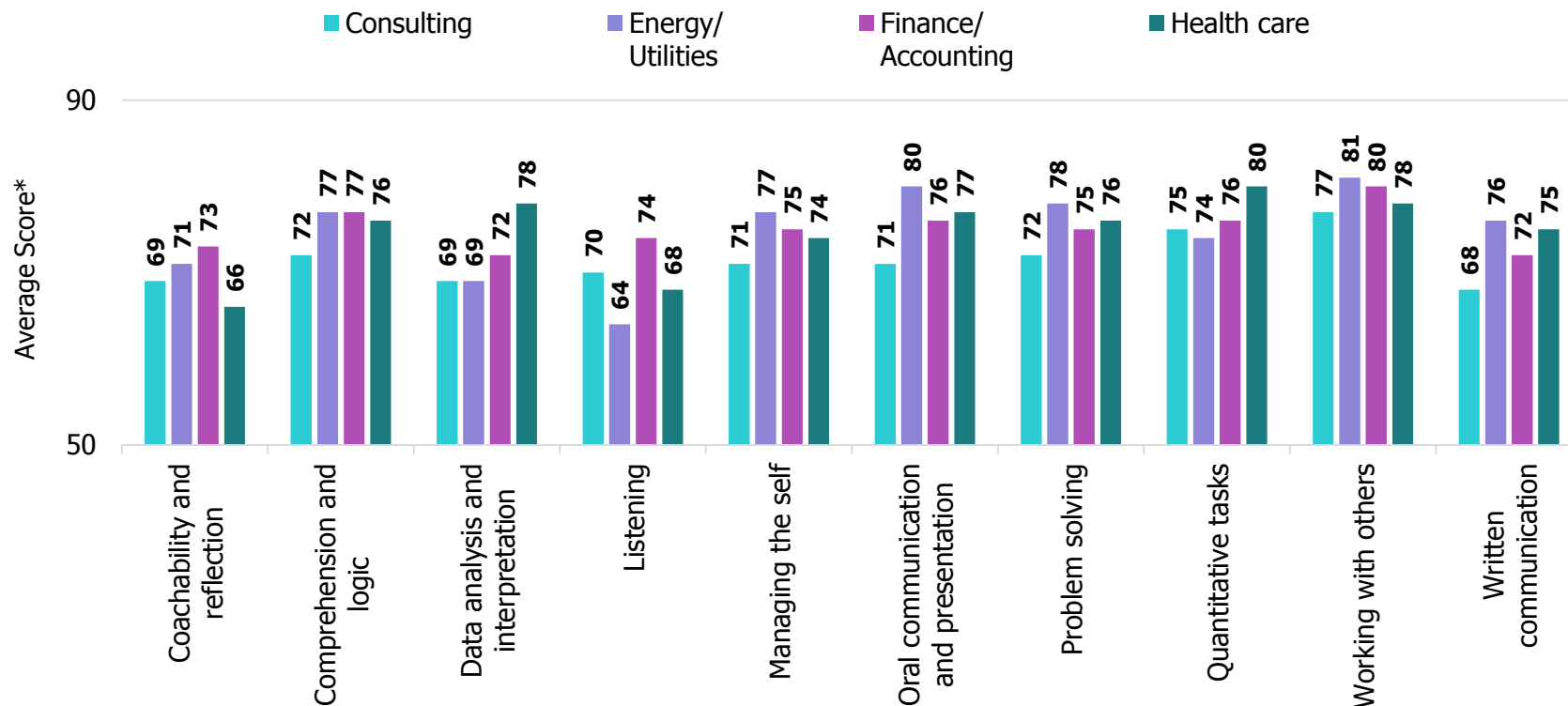


*Scale: 100 = Ranked in top 3; 50 = Ranked in next 3; 0 = Remaining 4.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Recruiters in different industries evaluate business school graduates' skill preparation differently

Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation, by Industry (Continued on Next Page)

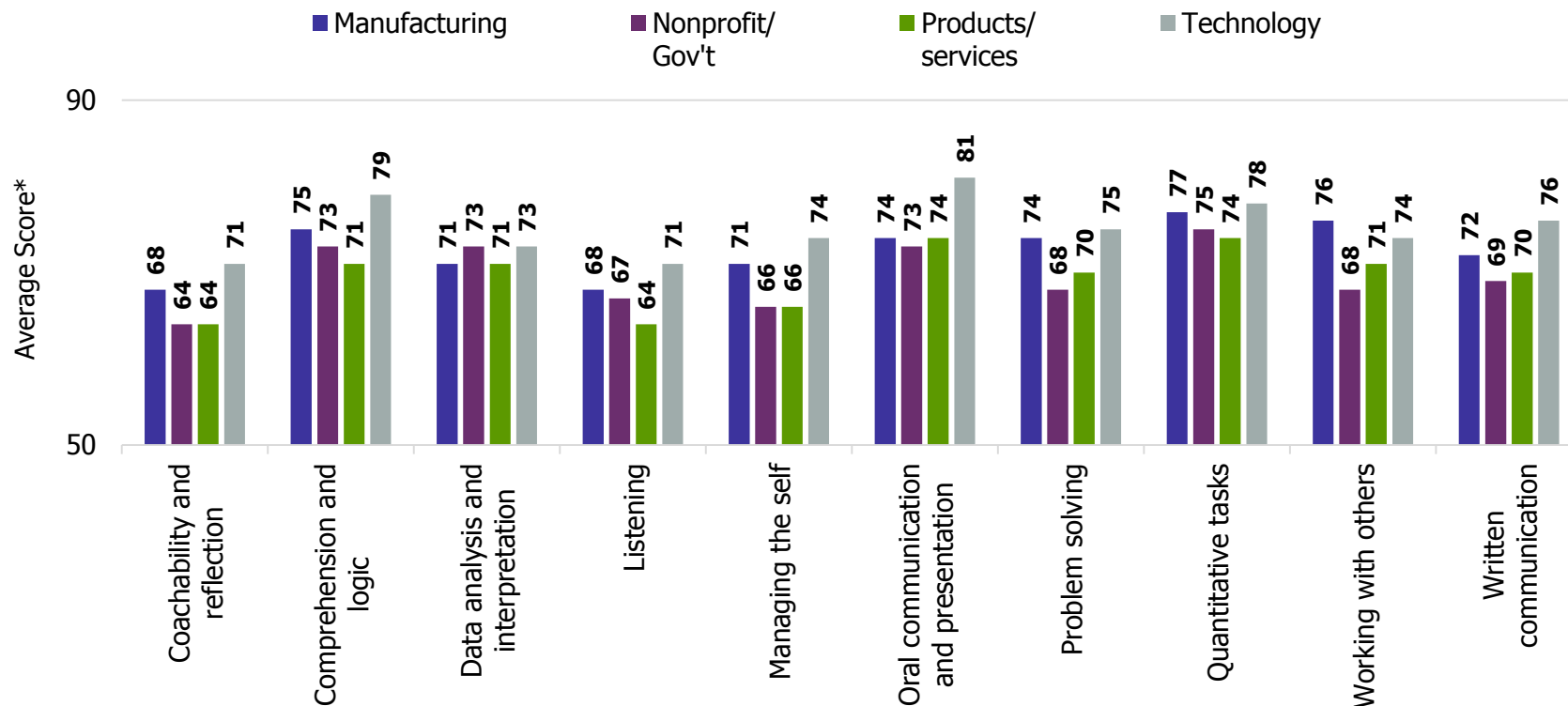


*Scale: 100 = Very well prepared; 67 = Adequately prepared; 33 = Not very prepared; 0 = Not at all prepared.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Recruiters in different industries evaluate business school graduates' skill preparation differently

Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation, by Industry (Continued From Previous Page)

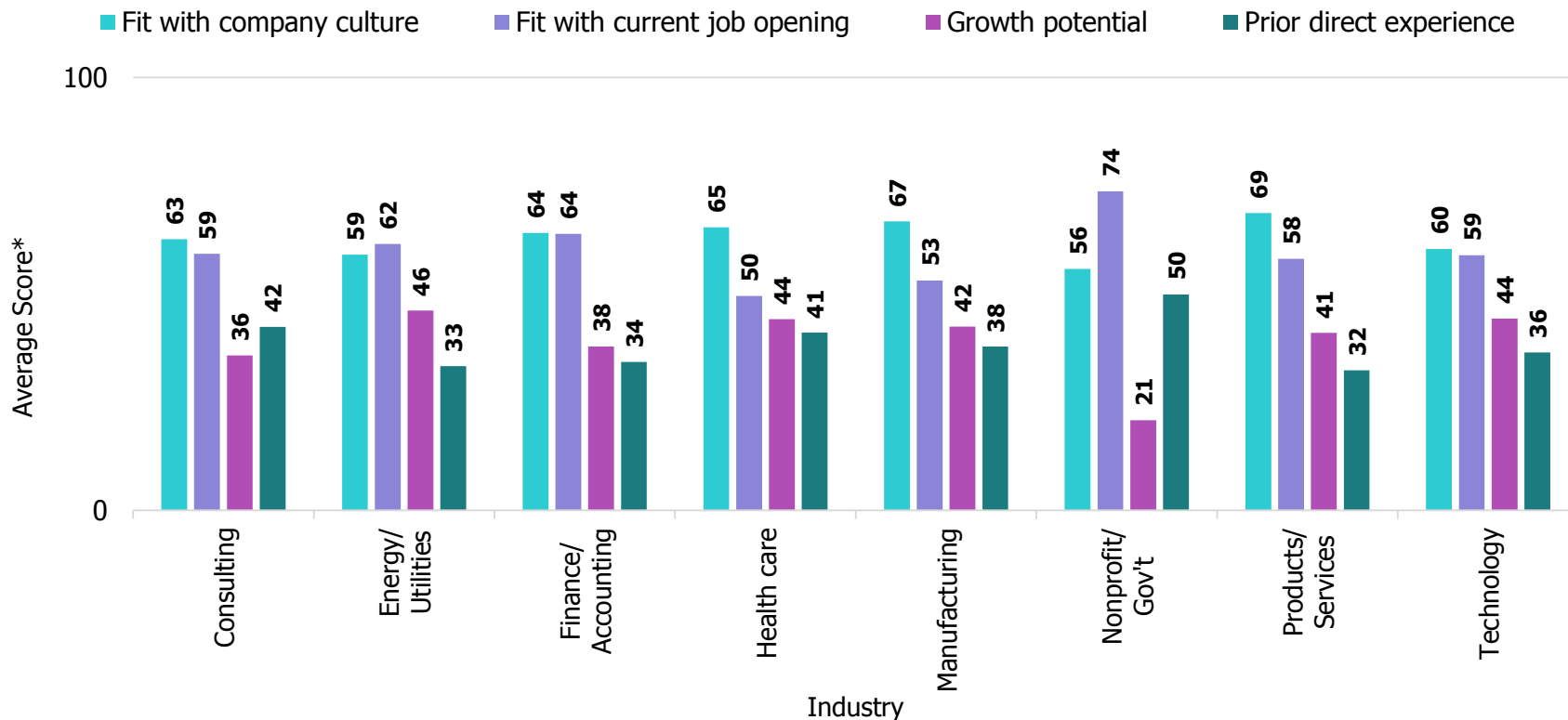


*Scale: 100 = Very well prepared; 67 = Adequately prepared; 33 = Not very prepared; 0 = Not at all prepared.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Fit with company culture and job opening most important hiring decision factors across industries

Hiring Decision Factors, by Industry



*Scale: 100 = Ranked most important; 67 = ranked second most important; 33 = ranked third most important; 0 = least important.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

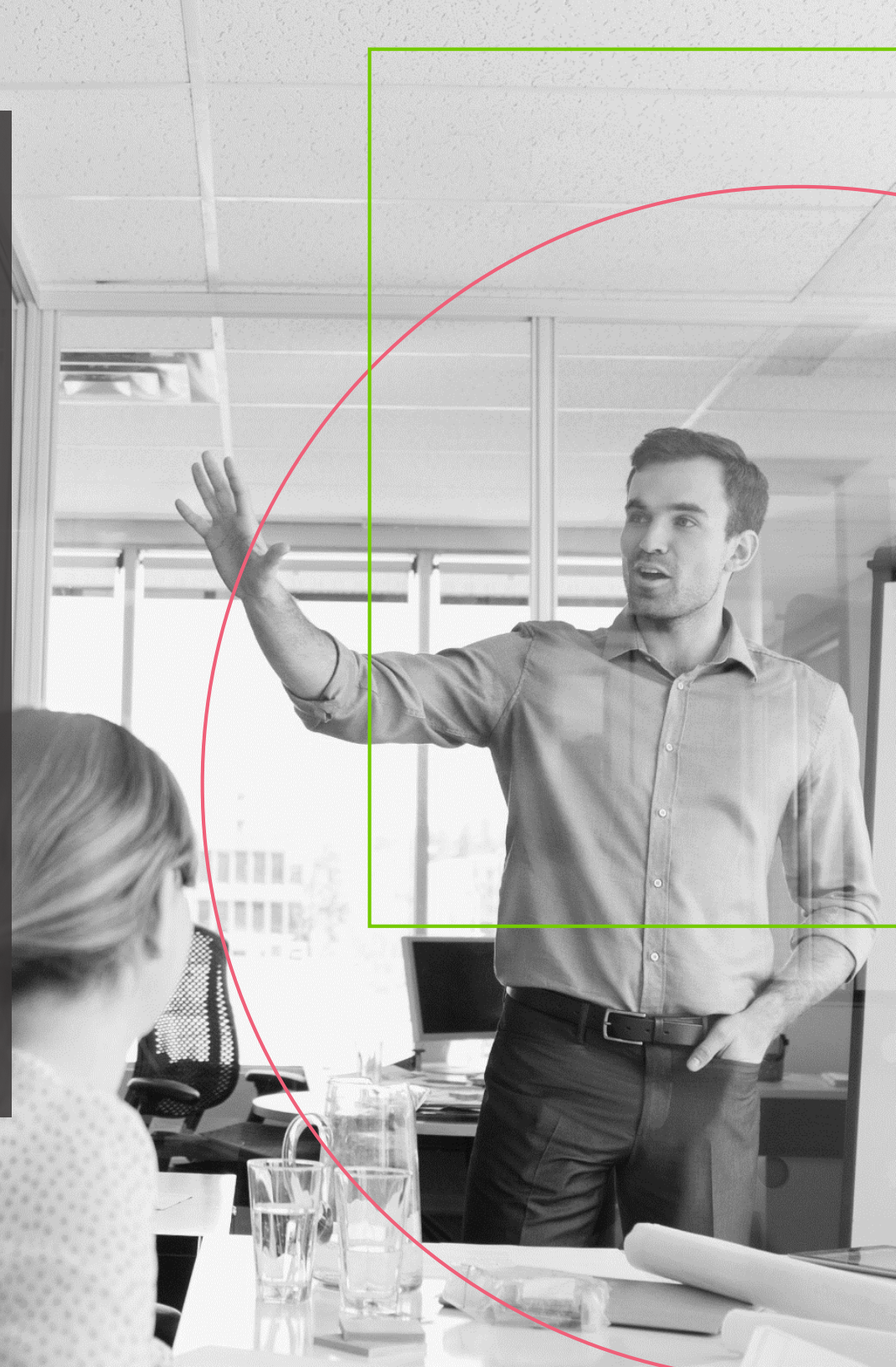
Company Size

This section presents survey findings by company size, including fewer than 100 employees, 100 to 999 employees, 1,000 to 9,999 employees and 10,000 or more employees.

Larger companies tend to rate recent business graduates' level of preparedness for success higher than smaller employers. For example, 33 percent of companies with 10,000 or more employees strongly agree graduates are prepared for success, compared with 13 percent of companies with fewer than 100 employees.

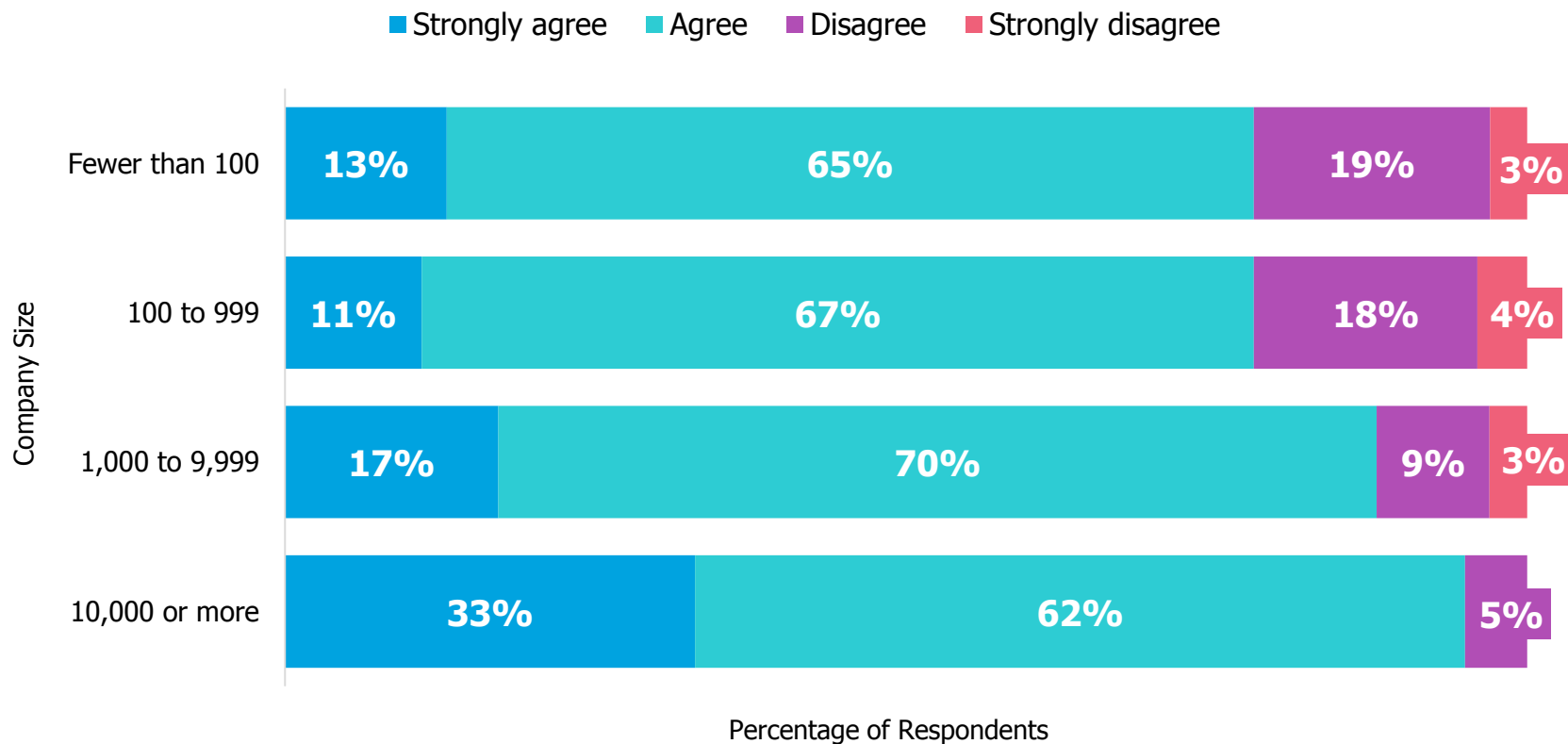
Smaller companies rate written communication, managing the self, coachability and reflection, and listening as more important to their current job openings compared with larger companies. Larger companies, on the other hand, rate the skills of data analysis and interpretation, working with others, and oral communication and presentation as more important.

In making hiring decisions, smaller companies tend to place more weight on fit with the job opening and prior direct experience compared with larger companies. Larger employers place relatively more weight on fit with the company culture and growth potential.



Recruiters at larger companies tend to rate graduates' level of preparedness more highly

Business School Graduates Are Well Prepared to Be Successful in My Company, by Company Size

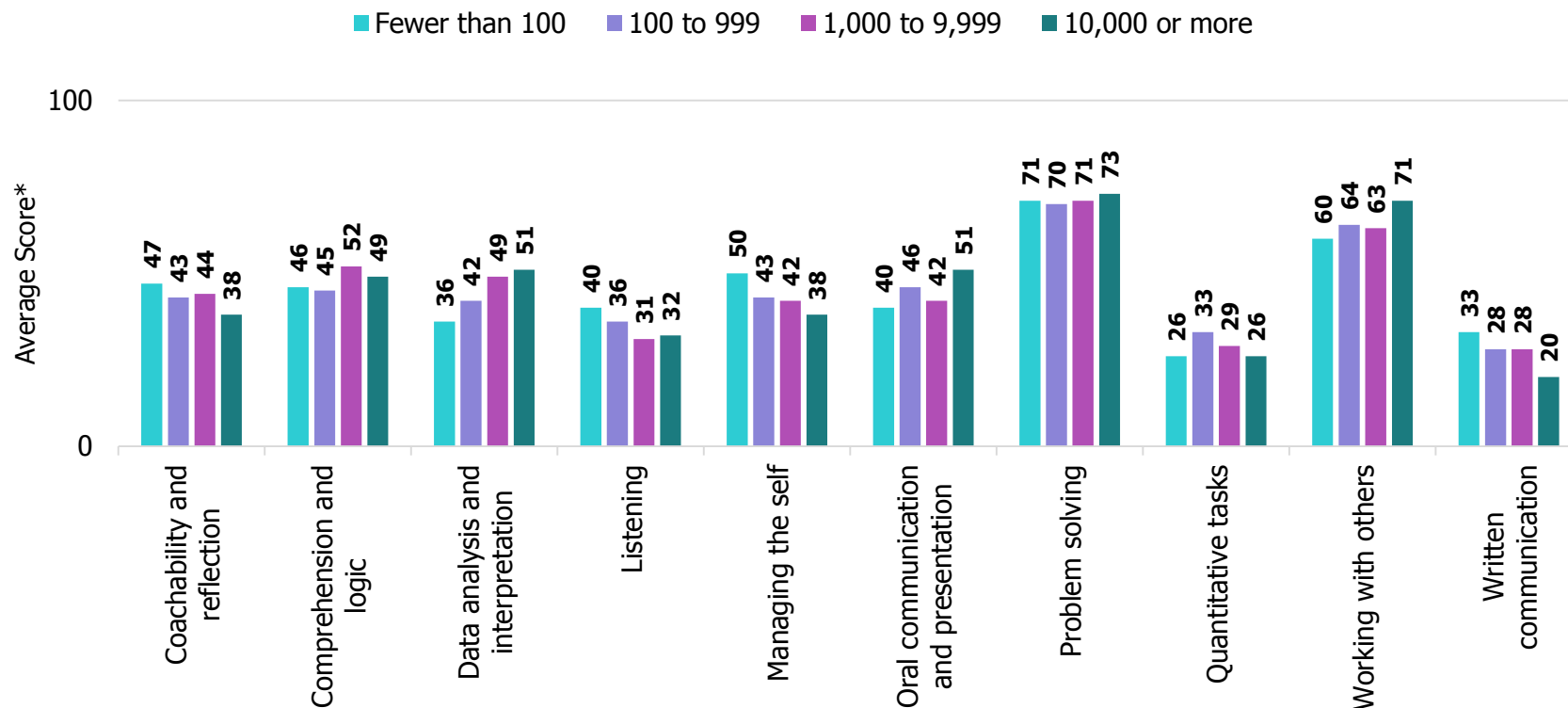


More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Company Size

Problem solving and working with others the most important; Larger companies seek data analysis and communications

Importance of Skills for Job Openings for Recent Business School Graduates, by Company Size



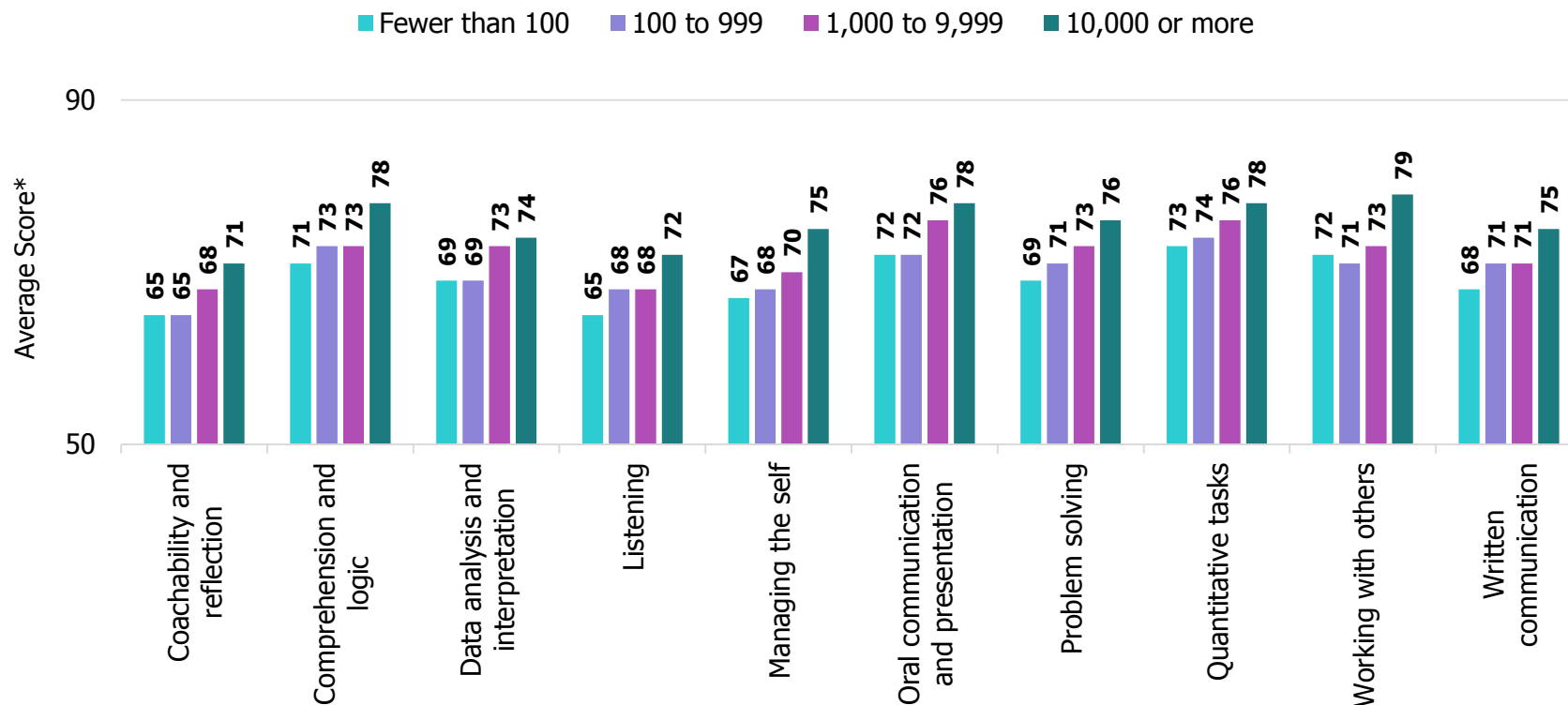
*Scale: 100 = Ranked in top 3; 50 = Ranked in next 3; 0 = Remaining 4.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Company Size

Larger companies tend to evaluate business school skill preparation more positively than other company types

Evaluation of Business School Skill Preparation, by Company Size



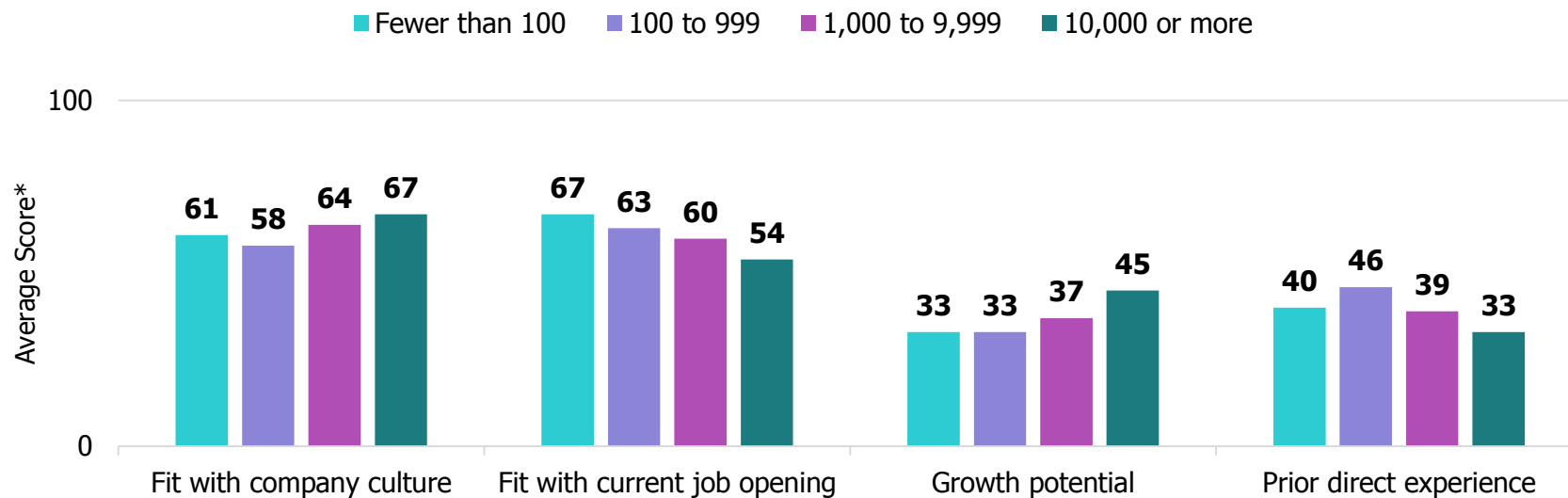
*Scale: 100 = Very well prepared; 67 = Adequately prepared; 33 = Not very prepared; 0 = Not at all prepared.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Company Size

Fit with company culture and job opening most important; Growth potential relatively more important to larger companies

Hiring Decision Factors, by Company Size

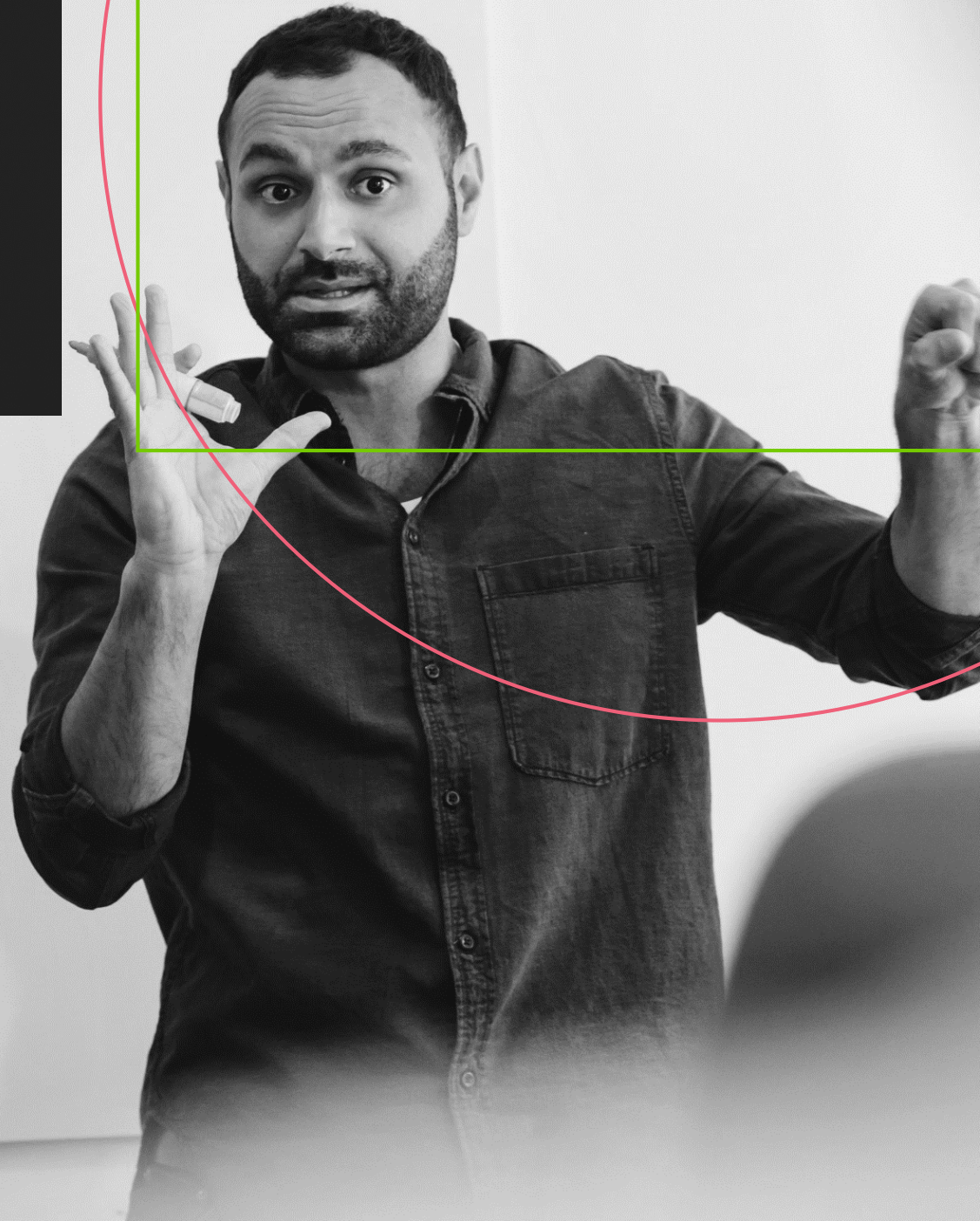


*Scale: 100 = Ranked most important; 67 = ranked second most important; 33 = ranked third most important; 0 = least important.

More details can be found in the [Methodology](#) section.

Methodology and Respondent Profile

This section provides details of the survey methodology, survey questions, data collection process, respondent profile, and regional classifications.



Methodology

The findings in this report are based on results of the Corporate Recruiters Survey 2019, GMAC's annual survey of employers who recruit from and hire MBA and other business master's graduates of business schools around the world.

This study does not represent a census of all employers of graduate business students worldwide, nor is it necessarily a representative sample of such employers. Because of this limitation, the results of this research study should not be used to generalize about the employer population, but they can be used as a reflection of the sample frame under consideration. Several clear trends emerge from the data, nevertheless.

The readers should note that the terms “respondent,” “employer,” and “company” are used interchangeably in this report and refer to survey respondents.

GMAC conducted this survey in partnership with MBA Career Services and Employer Alliance (MBA CSEA), EFMD, and HIGHERED between February 6 and March 17, 2019. These organizations recruited 116 business schools worldwide who then created a sample framework of employers who recruit MBA and business master's students.

A total of 1,202 employers located in 45 countries worldwide responded to the survey, including adequate sample sizes to report details for Asia Pacific, Europe, and the United States. Details of the countries included in each of these world regions are detailed on the next page.

Business school graduates' preparation for success

Survey question:

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Business school graduates are well prepared to be successful in my company.”

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Importance of skills required for job openings

Survey question:

Which of the following skills are most important for recent business school graduates to possess for your job openings? Select the three most important skills, then select the next three most important skills.

- Problem solving (ability to find solutions to difficult or complex problems)
- Quantitative tasks (comfortable working with numerical data)
- Data analysis and interpretation (able to interpret and synthesize data to extract insights and meaning)
- Comprehension and logic (apply critical and logical reasoning skills to evaluate arguments and draw conclusions)
- Listening (can extract key points, and evaluate and analyze the logic of a spoken argument)
- Written communication (structured writing that communicates ideas clearly and concisely)
- Oral communication and presentation (effectively present and communicate quantitative and qualitative data)
- Managing the self (behaves ethically and exerts the necessary effort and persistence to achieve goals and manage setbacks)
- Working with others (ability to work with others to achieve a common goal)
- Coachability and reflection (reflective learner who is able to internalize and act upon feedback)

Analysis methodology:

Each of the three skills that were selected as most important are assigned 100 points. The three skills selected as the next most important are assigned 50 points. The remaining four skills are assigned 0 points.

Evaluation of business school skill preparation

Survey question:

How well prepared are recent business school graduates for each of the following skills?

- Problem solving (ability to find solutions to difficult or complex problems)
- Quantitative tasks (comfortable working with numerical data)
- Data analysis and interpretation (able to interpret and synthesize data to extract insights and meaning)
- Comprehension and logic (apply critical and logical reasoning skills to evaluate arguments and draw conclusions)
- Listening (can extract key points, and evaluate and analyze the logic of a spoken argument)
- Written communication (structured writing that communicates ideas clearly and concisely)
- Oral communication and presentation (effectively present and communicate quantitative and qualitative data)
- Managing the self (behaves ethically and exerts the necessary effort and persistence to achieve goals and manage setbacks)
- Working with others (ability to work with others to achieve a common goal)
- Coachability and reflection (reflective learner who is able to internalize and act upon feedback)

Analysis methodology:

Respondents rated each skill on the following scale: Not at all prepared (0); not very prepared (33); adequately prepared (67); very well prepared (100).

Hiring decision factors

Survey question:

Please rank the following four items in order of importance to the hiring decision of a business school candidate.

- Growth potential
- Fit with current job opening
- Fit with company culture
- Prior direct experience

Analysis methodology:

Respondents ranked the four factors from most important (100), (67), (33), to least important (0).

Respondent Profile

Corporate Recruiters Survey Respondents, 2019

N = 1,202

Company World Region	Percentage	Company Size	Percentage
Africa/Middle East	1%	Fewer than 100 employees	28%
Canada	2%	100 to 999 employees	16%
Central and South Asia	0%	1,000 to 9,999 employees	18%
East and Southeast Asia	3%	10,000 or more employees	38%
Europe	13%	Industry	Percentage
Latin America	1%	Consulting	17%
United States	79%	Energy/Utilities	3%
Company Type	Percentage*	Finance/Accounting	14%
Fortune Global 100	16%	Health care	8%
Fortune Global 500	17%	Technology	14%
For-profit, private	57%	Manufacturing	10%
For-profit, public	31%	Nonprofit/Government	12%
A startup	12%	Products/Services	22%

*Total of percentages for company type do not sum to 100 percent due to “none of the above” option.

Regional Classifications

The following list represents country/regional locations of employers who participated in the survey:

Asia Pacific

Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand

Canada

Canada

Europe

Albania, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom

Latin America

Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Venezuela

Middle East and Africa

Kenya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates

United States

United States

US regions are based on employer locations using the regional classifications of the US Census Bureau:

US Northeast

Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont

US Midwest

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Wisconsin

US South

Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia

US West

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Contributors and Contact Information

Contributors

The following individuals from the GMAC Research team made significant contributions to the publication of this report:

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